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**NEWS RELEASE**

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Taddeo Barchitta, 74, of Arlington, Virginia, pled guilty today to the illegal sale of archeological resources in interstate commerce in violation of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, before the Honorable Claude M. Hilton, United States District Judge. Barchitta will be sentenced on December 12, 2003, at which time he faces a maximum sentence of 2 years imprisonment and \$250,000 in fines.

In May 2003, after receiving a lead from the Fairfax County Police Department, undercover agents with the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) purchased 29 items for \$150,000 from Barchitta. Twenty-three of those items were authenticated by the Smithsonian Institute as pre-Columbian artifacts, some dating back to 100 A.D., possibly from the Sipan Region. Additionally, through Barchitta's cooperation, ICE agents recovered seven similar items from a residence near Miami, Florida. They also notified Peruvian authorities of a potential source for additional items in Lima, Peru.

Mr. McNulty said: "Stealing a nation's artifacts is a serious matter. It denies future generations insight into their past and will not be tolerated. We will find and prosecute those who attempt to profit through the sale of a nation's heritage."

Also making this announcement is Kevin Delli-Colli, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement who stated: "Individuals who would rob present and future generations access to their cultural and ethnological legacy by dealing in stolen antiquities are contemptible and callous in their greed and should be punished. We look forward to making restitution to the people of Peru."

This investigation was conducted by agents of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Dennis M. Kennedy.

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